

# Michigan Water Source Pilot for Urban Farmers

Application Deadline August 16, 2024



## Background

Michigan urban farmers typically utilize razed vacant lots and many do not have access to water. When cities remove dwellings from city lots, utilities, including water, are disconnected, making municipal water unavailable.



Establishing a new water connection could be cost prohibitive for small scale urban producers. Currently producers rely on rainwater and/or water brought to the property from off-site. Bringing water from off-site can be costly and is labor and time intensive. Additionally, some municipalities do not allow private wells, removing this option for many producers.

Rainwater collection is more sustainable and cost-effective compared to municipal water sources. Even urban producers with access to municipal water will benefit by collecting rainwater.

## Pilot Objective

Expanding growers' ability to collect and store rainwater and install efficient irrigation systems will make urban operations more sustainable and cost effective. Enhanced rainwater collection

and efficient irrigation systems are a long-term and environmentally sound method to supply water to urban farms.

Installing more efficient irrigation systems, such as drip irrigation, will benefit producers utilizing rainwater catchment, as well as producers using municipal water sources.

## How will it work?

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has set aside \$2 million in funding through its Environmental Quality Incentives Program to fund the pilot. This funding will go towards financial assistance for implementing selected conservation practices designed to conserve water through the collection of rainwater and irrigation efficiency.

Each conservation practice has a set payment rate. After the practice is implemented and determined to meet NRCS standards, payment is made to the producer. Historically Underserved producers receive a higher payment rate and are eligible to receive an advanced payment before the practice is implemented.

## Who can apply?

The Michigan Water Source Pilot will be offered to producers in urban areas within Genesee, Kent, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties.

Producers who have not previously participated in USDA programs must register their farming operation at their local USDA Farm Service Agency office. The program is available to all producers regardless of farm size and whether they own land or rent.

## EQIP

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides conservation financial assistance for working lands. Rather than take land out of production, EQIP helps farmers maintain or improve production while conserving natural resources.

EQIP assistance is available for all types of agricultural operations, including field crops, specialty crops, organic, confined livestock and grazing, and private non-industrial forest land.





## Available Practices

The Water Source Pilot provides financial assistance for selected core practices, including:

- High Tunnel System\* (hoophouse)
- Irrigation Pipeline
- Irrigation System, micro-irrigation
- Irrigation Water Management
- Pumping Plant
- Roof Runoff Structure
- Water Harvesting Catchment

*\*High tunnels funded through this pilot must include a roof runoff structure to collect rainwater.*

Additional complimentary conservation practices are also eligible for funding through this pilot, examples include cover crops, no-till, reduced till, soil health testing, and conservation crop rotation.

Producers with existing high tunnels may apply for the roof runoff structure to collect water for irrigation. This is available whether or not the high tunnel was purchased through EQIP.

Irrigation water management and no till are high priority practices in Michigan and receive a higher payment rate.



Water Harvesting Catchment



Roof runoff structure /High Tunnel



Irrigation System, Micro-irrigation

## When and How to Apply

EQIP applications are accepted on a continuous basis. Application forms are available at local NRCS offices and on the NRCS website. Application forms can be submitted to the local field office or through [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov).

### QR Code:

Find your local service center.

